



16th September 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Yesterday was a hectic day for many, with the school unfortunately experiencing the impact of a positive coronavirus case. Rather than wait for my next regular parent update and now the rush of yesterday has diminished, I thought it would be pertinent to contact you to provide more information about the process we followed yesterday. I hope by doing this, I will help reduce any concerns that have arisen, and prevent any inaccurate rumours.

Following confirmation of a positive case within our school community, I am obliged to work with a Public Health Lead at North Yorkshire County Council: this person provides guidance and support on how to begin the complex process of contact tracing. Contact tracing involves looking at close contacts and proximity contacts of the student who has tested positive. This involved speaking with the family and ascertaining friendship groups and social time activity, as well as cross-referencing lessons and class lists and speaking with different teachers. I was asked by the public health team to look back over the previous three days of the timetable before symptoms arose in the affected individual.

Once all of the facts had been established about which students met the thresholds for direct or proximity contact with the affected individual (please note they may or may not be aware of this contact), I then discussed these with the Public Health Lead and took advice on which students to send home for isolation. Their isolation began from the last day they could have had contact with the student.

Where possible, efforts are made to avoid sending the whole year group home; this is easier in lower year groups as they are taught a number of lessons in the same class. Further up the school, it becomes more complicated due to the combination of subjects students in examination years take. Our pod system is clearly vitally important in preventing the closure of the whole school.

The continuation of learning for students who have been asked to self-isolate is a priority for us, but the exact input they receive will depend on the scenario. For example, where whole classes or year groups are in isolation, we can focus the teachers' attention entirely on remote learning with live online sessions and instant feedback. Where only a few students from a class are isolating, the teacher still needs to teach the rest of the class and may rely more heavily on resources posted in advance to the Google classroom with feedback and contact provided later. Mr McGreal, Assistant Headteacher, is providing Y7 families with more information on this today, and we will also include more details for all parents in the next fortnightly parent update.

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I must say how disappointed we were to be sending Y7 students home yesterday so soon into their secondary education, especially after they have settled so well. However, we must follow the guidance and advice that is in place to keep everyone as safe as possible. Like many across the country, we hope a significant improvement to testing in this country will mean the year is not unduly impacted by scenarios such as that which unfolded yesterday.

We are incredibly grateful for the speedy response of our Y7 parents who came to collect their children yesterday, and to the whole of our parent body who have shown immense support to the school as we navigate these choppy waters.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs H. L. Millett

Headteacher

